

Biodiversity Revisited

The issue

The diversity of life that sustains humanity is being severely degraded by human action. This is leading to deterioration in land, air and water quality, loss of natural ecosystems and widespread declines in populations of wild species. These changes are well documented and of existential significance to human societies, yet significant knowledge about the problem has not catalyzed effective, broad-based action.

Biodiversity has not, generally speaking, proven to be a compelling object for sufficient action to halt the degradation of the diversity of life on earth. At the same time, the fragmentation of research and policy efforts into overlapping agendas around biodiversity, climate, oceans, land degradation and sustainable development has prevented the conservation community from developing a holistic approach to sustaining the diversity of life on Earth. Furthermore, the predominant focus of research on describing biophysical change does not provide the necessary insight into the social and policy dynamics that would facilitate effective action.

Biodiversity – as it is currently understood – refers to the variety and variability within living organisms that is believed to contribute to the stability and resilience of living systems, offering insurance against predictable and unpredictable future environmental change. It also directly supports human livelihoods and wellbeing.

The piecemeal and ineffective responses to biodiversity loss may be because the concept itself is so vague. The systems involved are complex, and there is still only a basic understanding of what constitutes a dangerous degree of biodiversity loss. It is therefore not surprising that concern about biodiversity is not widely shared within society. It also explains why governments and businesses are able to ignore the issue.



The response

Biodiversity Revisited is the first comprehensive review of the concepts, narratives, governance, science, systems and futures underpinning biodiversity science since the emergence of the term in the 1980s.

Biodiversity Revisited will add to the ideas and efforts leading to 2020, a landmark policy year for biodiversity conservation, climate change and sustainable land use. Biodiversity Revisited will also produce a five-year research agenda to create the conditions for science to help achieve the 2030 sustainable development goals set by the United Nations.

Biodiversity Revisited is a [Luc Hoffmann Institute](#) initiative in collaboration with [WWF](#), [Future Earth](#), [ETH Zurich Department of Environmental Systems Science](#), [University of Cambridge Conservation Research Institute](#) and the [Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research at University College London](#), and exists thanks to generous funding from the [NOMIS Foundation](#), the [MAVA Foundation](#) and [WWF International](#). The journal [Nature Sustainability](#) endorses the initiative.

The initiative is governed by a secretariat and a Steering Committee, the latter including Prof. Adil Najam, Chair (Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University), Prof. Jon Hutton (Luc Hoffmann Institute), Dr Amy Luers (Future Earth), Prof. Jaboury Ghazoul (ETH Zurich), Prof. Bhaskar Vera (University of Cambridge), Prof. Georgina Mace (UCL) and Dr Rebecca Shaw (WWF).

For more information please visit the [Biodiversity Revisited website](#) or contact: biodiversityrevisited@wwfint.org

